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# CONFESSION of FAITH,

DELIVERED AT THE

## ORDINATION

OF

JOSEPH JENKINS, A. M.

AT

WREXHAM in DENBIGHSHIRE,

September 8, 1773.

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*Be ready always to give an answer to every  
man that asketh you a reason of the hope  
that is in you, with meekness and fear.*

*1 Pet. iii. 15.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

*IT is unnecessary to apologize for printing the following CONFESSION OF FAITH, as there is no intention of making it publick; a few Copies only being struck off, for the use of the Church before which it was delivered; and as a means of fixing a lasting impresson of the very affecting solemnity that occasioned it; for which purpose also, a short memorial of the services of the day is here subjoined.*

*The Rev. Mr. Fawcett, of Wainsgate, Yorkshire, opened the work, by reading some suitable portions of scripture, and then prayed.*

*The Rev. Mr. Medley, of Liverpool, introduced the Ordination.*

*The call of the Church and its acceptance being now publickly recognized, and Mr. Jenkins's Confession of Faith delivered, the Rev. Mr. Tommas, of Bristol, prayed over him, the other ministers joining in laying on hands.*

*The Rev. Mr. Hartley, of Haworth, Yorkshire, gave the Charge, from Acts xx. 26.*

*The Rev. Mr. Tommas preached to the people from Rom. xv. 30. And,*

*The Rev. Mr. Sandys concluded with prayer.*



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 CONFESSION of FAITH, &c.

**R**ESPECTING my views of the great matters of religion, I think it but reasonable, that every congregation should be satisfied, in the religious sentiments of the minister they encourage to preach, and particularly him whom they call to be their pastor. If there is a difference between one man's views and the views of another; the right of private judgment seems to require, that a people should be satisfied in the minister whom they are to countenance and attend upon. The case of a publick, compulsory requisition, enforced by pains and penalties, is widely different from that of a private friendly enquiry made by the congregation, and by the ministers to be concerned, in setting apart the candidate for the pastoral office; the one is manifestly unreasonable; the other, upon the very principles of religious liberty, highly proper. Even the zealous gentleman, who is so desirous of exploding from christianity almost every doc-

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trine, that sets it above a mere system of refined morality, yet insists, and that very properly, that principles are by no means of an indifferent nature : <sup>a</sup> Nor is there any community under the denomination of christian, (however comprehensive or unlimited their ideas of the word *charity* may be) but wish, that their minister be of their own judgment, respecting religious subjects.

It is therefore, in ready compliance with the request of the church and ministers present, that I now make a confession of those things in religion, which I believe, which I desire cordially to receive, embrace and live upon for my own comfort and salvation, and which, in the strength of divine grace, I propose to preach to others.

The foundation of all true religion must be laid in the belief of a supreme Being, the intelligent cause and former of all things. The dictates of nature, of that system by which we are surrounded, evince that there is a God. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. But for the surest and most satisfactory discoveries

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<sup>a</sup> Dr. Priestly's farewell sermon to the congregation at Mill-Hill, Leeds, page 29.



coveries of his eternal power and Godhead, we are indebted to what he has been pleased to reveal of himself, in the *Bible*: This book I consider as the word of God, written by his inspiration, and as profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness: To this book I desire to look, and by this to square my sentiments, as (under the teachings of God's spirit) the unerring, and the only unerring guide, in matters of faith or practice. On the authority of the Bible then, I believe that there is one, and but one God; a glorious, awful and majestic Being, possessed of all possible perfection, infinitely wise, holy, just and good, present every where, comprehending all things, but himself comprehended of no one, the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, but who is from everlasting to everlasting God.

And yet, while there can be but one God, the scripture leads me to the belief of three persons in the Godhead; to each of whom, in direct terms, distinct and personal actions are ascribed; and to each of whom, in as direct terms, the attributes, titles, honours,

and operations of *Deity* are clearly ascribed : viz. the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, into whose name we are commanded to be baptized. These I believe from the scriptures, are the same in substance ; and however either of them may be considered as inferior, on account of offices sustained, in the œconomy of redemption ; yet that they are, when considered absolutely, equal in power, dignity, and glory, being *One God* : tho' the manner *how* the divine essence is distinguished, and yet united, three and yet one, I pretend not to know or define : I know not the nature of mine own soul ; much less can I by searching find out God.

I believe, that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, in the space of six days, and all very good ; that he upholds all things by the word of his power ; and that he principally displayed his glory in this world by the creation of *Man*, a rational, accountable and immortal creature ; made but a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour ; formed in *righteousness and true holiness*,<sup>b</sup> with the image of his God shining bright upon him ;

<sup>b</sup> Eph. iv. 24.

his soul endued with every moral excellency, so as to be capable of knowing, loving, and serving his Creator, and situated in a state of honour and happiness; a state which was secured to him, on condition of his sinless obedience; particularly his not eating of a certain prohibited tree, placed in the *garden of Eden*, as a test of his obedience, and of which he was not to eat, on pain of death.<sup>c</sup>

I believe that man, being created in honour, abode not in it: Our first parents, thro' the influence of Satan, fell from the state in which they were created, dishonoured God, debased their own natures, and ruined their souls; they lost their original righteousness, corrupted their frame, subjected themselves to the miseries of this life, to death, and the pains of hell for ever.<sup>d</sup>

I believe farther, upon the authority of divine revelation, that our first parent *Adam*, was not looked upon, simply in a *personal* view, when he enjoyed life and happiness, and the promise of immortal life and happiness, on the footing of his compliance with the commands of God, and that the threatening of death, in case of his disobedience,

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was

<sup>c</sup> Gen. ii. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. iii. 17.



was not confined to him *only*; but that, he being the *head* and *natural representative* of his posterity, his obedience had respect to his descendants as well as himself; so that if he had stood, we should have stood in him, and now he has fallen, his disobedience has attained *us*; we fell with him: As his righteousness would have been of infinite service to us; so his transgression has been of infinite disservice to us; and involved a whole world in misery and ruin. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, (even on infants who were never capable of sinning after the similitude of Adam's transgression) for that all in him have sinned.*<sup>e</sup> Yea more, by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;<sup>f</sup> and from him we have derived a corrupt and depraved nature; are *brought forth in iniquity, and conceived in sin*;<sup>g</sup> so that by nature, we are prone continually to evil, and averse to that which is good; bearing upon us the image of our degenerate

<sup>e</sup> Rom. v. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. v. 16.

<sup>g</sup> See Ghandler's life of David. Vol. II. p. 257, and the note.

<sup>h</sup> Psalm li. 5.



rate head; and, as the great Apostle Paul witnesses, *dead in trespasses and sins*; <sup>i</sup> a manner of expression, which, tho' it be figurative, yet must convey in it the idea of a total inaptitude, and insensibility to spiritual things, and the awful concerns of the soul; and from this sad depravity (as the fatal spring of every moral evil) do proceed all those actual transgressions, by which mankind, treading closely in the footsteps of their first parents, have also dishonoured God; exposed themselves to the wrath of the Almighty, and to the just sentence of his righteous law.

I believe, that whatever circumstances may, in this scriptural representation, appear *to us* mysterious or incomprehensible; and however difficult or impossible it may be, for our finite minds, to investigate or account for every particular, relating to the entrance of sin into the world; yet, that God is clear of all blame in the fall of man or its effects: *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* <sup>k</sup> Consequently, that when mankind were ruined by sin, he might justly have left the whole race to

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perish,

<sup>i</sup> Eph. ii. 1.<sup>k</sup> Psalm cxlv. 17.

perish, for the same reason that he in justice abandoned the angels who fell; and that the whole race would certainly have perished, if the Lord had not, out of his own mere favour, provided a Saviour.

I believe also, that the state of mankind would not have been more favourable, if the Lord had *only* sent the Saviour with pardon in his hands; and left it entirely at the undirected, uninfluenced choice of men, to accept of it; such a Scheme would not have issued in the salvation of one soul;<sup>1</sup> because so great is the infatuation of sin, and the delight of men in it; so great is that *deadness* in them, respecting their souls, which I have already mentioned; so great is their enmity to God, their unbelief, and hatred of Christ and salvation thro' him alone, that they *will not come unto him, that they might have life*; <sup>m</sup> *yea, no man CAN come unto him, except the Father draw him*; <sup>n</sup> an inability indeed, which does not proceed from a want of rational, and intellectual faculties, but from the perverseness and wicked prejudices of the heart; from an indisposition to religion,

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<sup>1</sup> *Cooper* on predestination unto life, p. 90, 91.

<sup>m</sup> John v. 40.

<sup>n</sup> John vi. 44.

by all human means invincible. This is a matter of fact and experience : Hence, the most awakening and cogent preaching is so frequently unsuccessful ; Paul plants, and Apollos waters in vain ; so that, if the turning point, in conversion from sin to God, were in the creature ; if that sentiment were the truth, “ *that man must begin with God, before God begins with him ;* ” it might be asked in despair, “ *Who then can be saved ?* ” for none would be saved ; and when this is represented as a doctrine of scripture, it ought not to be treated as if only the distinguishing tenet of a party, but considered as an *historical truth*, which the scripture relates as it finds it ; and which would have been equally true, if divine revelation had been entirely silent about it. ° And this being the state of the case,

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° “ If this (*viz. the corruption of nature*) be a difficulty, I would beg leave to observe, that it is a difficulty which affects natural as well as revealed religion ; since we *must* take human nature *as it is* ; and if it be really in a state of disorder and corruption, and cannot be otherwise, considering the common law of its production, the difficulty must have been as ancient as the first man that was born ;  
“ and

I believe that God, out of his own free and sovereign good will, and for the display of the riches of his unmerited compassion and grace, was pleased, from all eternity, and foreseeing the fall, to chuse a certain number of the fallen race of Adam to salvation, through sanctification, and a belief of the truth : And when I reflect on the ruin the whole world was in, as the direct consequence of their departure from God, the corrupt bias of the mind, and its obstinate bent to its own misery ; I can, by no means, look upon this scheme of *personal election*, as a decision of cruelty, and vindictive arbitrary resentment ; but, on the contrary, as a scheme of undeserved mercy and love, contrived to snatch many as brands out of the burning, in order to make them eternal monuments of grace, and to bring them to glory, when otherwise the world must have been *totally* lost.——Why the Lord was not pleased to chuse *all*, I leave to his infinite wisdom,

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“ and therefore can be no objection against the truth  
 “ of revelation, but it must be equally so against natural religion, which *must equally allow the thing,*  
 “ *if it be in reality a fact, with revelation itself.*”

Chandler's life of David. Vol. II. p 258,



wisdom, who was not *obliged* to chuse *any* ?  
 The infinite evil in sin makes it a subject of amazement and admiration that *any* creatures so defiled, should be made the objects of everlasting love : And while I think with awe, of the *vessels of wrath fitted*, by their own wickedness and rebellion, for *destruction*, and tremble at the justice of God in punishing them, I would adore *the riches of his glory*, whereby others are *vessels of mercy*, which God, according to the Apostle's language,

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P " If it be asked, why God did not afford this help  
 " (*effectual grace*) to all mankind ? I answer, that  
 " the elect are designed for a station in heaven, void  
 " for them by the fall of the angels, or some other  
 " way, and that a certain number may be so provid-  
 " ed and no more ; and when the number of the elect  
 " is full, then will follow the consummation of all  
 " things. But it is reasonable to permit God to  
 " chuse the persons, to whom he will vouchsafe this  
 " supernatural favour, and to take care that the par-  
 " doning and recovering of sinners may not have an  
 " ill effect on the rest of his creatures : For nothing  
 " could more fully demonstrate the determinate de-  
 " cree of God, not to dispense with obedience to his  
 " laws, on the observation of which the good of the  
 " whole depends, than that he would not pardon a  
 " few on a less consideration than the interposition  
 " and death of his son." *Bishop of Carlisle (Dr. Law's) Notes on King's Origin of Evil. 4th Edit. p. 363.*

guage, *had afore prepared unto glory*; <sup>1</sup> ———  
 The ground or cause of this discriminating choice of the people of God unto salvation, was not, I believe, any good works which they have done, or which it was foreseen they would do; but God's own free will entirely. In order to prove that God previously foresaw such qualifications in them, it must first of all be proved, that they *had* these commendable qualifications inherent in them, to induce him to chuse them; I say, inherent in them, previous to the implantation of them by the Lord himself; but this experience contradicts, and scripture expressly denies, declaring that *not by works of righteousness which we have done, we are saved.* <sup>2</sup> I conclude then, that as the Lord does not foresee that which does not exist, nor in this case possibly could exist; so our *election* is not according to our works; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. <sup>3</sup>

I believe, that in pursuance of this design of free and sovereign mercy, the *Son of God*, in the fulness of time, became incarnate,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. 23.    <sup>2</sup> Titus iii. 5.    <sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9.

nate, and was *God manifest in the flesh*. That in a way, inconceivable to us, he took the *human nature* into union with the divine; that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and dwelt on this earth. His view in coming into the world, being to glorify his Father, and to save sinners, I believe, that by his miracles, he gave the fullest attestation that he came from heaven — by his holy and spotless life, he fulfilled the law and made it appear honourable — in his sufferings and death, he bore all the guilt of all his people, and thus, by *his* obedience unto death, satisfied the justice of God for *their* sins, and brought in *everlasting righteousness*<sup>†</sup> for the free and complete justification of the believing sinner. I believe, that having been crucified, dead and buried, he on the third day rose again from the dead; that he was thereby declared to be the Son of God with power; that thereby he evidenced the pardon of his people's sins; and became the first fruits of them that slept. I believe, that after being seen by his disciples, and remaining forty days on earth, he ascended  
into

<sup>†</sup> Daniel ix. 24.

into heaven, where he now sits at the *right hand of the Majesty on high* — as a kind and powerful intercessor with the Father ; as the head of the body the church, directing all the affairs of *Zion* ; and that, as the representative of his saints, he has taken possession of heaven for them.

I believe, that every sinner saved, is justified and accepted of God, alone by the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith ; and not in whole or in part, by any worthiness or righteousness of his own ; neither are any good qualities wrought *in* the sinner, nor any good works done *by* him, the cause or condition of this acceptance.

I believe, however, that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord ; and therefore, that whosoever is justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is also *born again*,<sup>a</sup> sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in the image of God ; being powerfully persuaded and inclined to hate sin, to love God and his commands, and to glorify God in his heart and life. — As also, that faith, love, repentance  
and

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 3.



and every other grace, constituting the existence of holiness, or the life and power of religion in the soul, do not proceed from any free will that men have, previously inclining them to seek grace from God, but wholly, and in every respect from the converting and transforming influences of divine grace upon the naturally carnal heart.

When I reflect also on the dreadful state out of which the grace of God rescues sinners; the love of God to his children, which *in him* must be unchangeable; the vast expence they were purchased at, even the precious blood of Christ; and the almighty agency of the blessed Spirit, necessary to quicken the dead soul; I cannot think that God would begin his work in the heart, and then leave it *uncertain*, whether the subjects of this work were saved or not; nor that his wisdom would suffer the weighty concerns of eternal salvation to be suspended on the weakness of human resolutions and exertions. I believe, therefore, that wherever God implants saving grace, he will watch over and conduct it with care and caution; and will *surely* keep up the life of religion in

in that soul, till he has perfected it in the inheritance of the saints in light.

I believe, that for the edification of the body of Christ, it is the will of God, that his people be separated from the world ; and to this end, that he has made it their duty to come *up out* of the world, and be joined in fellowship together, for the great purposes of brotherly love, and their mutual benefit. I conclude from hence too, that the church of Christ does not intend any *national establishment* of religion ; nor comprehend in its communion all the individuals of a country of every character, the bad as well as the good ; but is “ *a congregation of faithful, that is, godly and upright, men in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance.*”<sup>w</sup> I believe, that Christ is alone king in his church ; and that to him only of right belongs the ordering of every circumstance, relative to his worship and the discipline of his house ; that he has given plain and sufficient directions in his word, how his worship is to be conducted, his ordinances dispensed, his church governed ;

<sup>w</sup> XIXth Article of the Church of England.

governed ; and that he has appointed proper officers to be chosen by the church itself, for the regular management of such matters, as may contribute to the *order* and *welfare* of their respective societies.

Besides the publick and stated preaching of the word of God, the exercises of prayer, private instruction and reproof, as appointed means of converting sinners, and building up the saints, I believe that the ordinances which Christ has especially enjoined on his followers, are two, viz. *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*.

Baptism is an institution of Christ, whereby his disciples enter on the publick profession of his name, and is to be administered but *once* to each person. The intention of baptism is to profess our belief of the great doctrine of the *Trinity*, by ascribing equal honours to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and acknowledging them as our God, <sup>x</sup>—to declare our belief of the reality and efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ, <sup>y</sup>—to be a publick expression of our dying to sin, and our desire to walk in newness of life ; and as a significant representation

<sup>x</sup> Mat. xxviii. 19.

<sup>y</sup> Rom. vi. 3, 4.



presentation to the baptized believer of the washing away of his sins in the blood of the Lamb.<sup>2</sup> The proper subjects of baptism are those that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, with a vital and saving faith; and none but such as do make a profession of this faith, and can, in the judgment of charity, be looked on as the children of God, are to be baptized, because the meaning of baptism cannot be fulfilled in any other than these; the scripture expressly declares, that *so many*<sup>a</sup> as were baptized in the first ages of christianity, professed in that ordinance to be *dead to sin*,<sup>b</sup> and accordingly it *limits* baptism to such as these, *even to as many as the Lord our God shall*, by his grace, effectually call. Acts ii. 39.<sup>c</sup> I

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 16. <sup>a</sup> οσδοι *whoever*. <sup>b</sup> Rom. vi. 3,—4.

<sup>c</sup> As the words here quoted are manifestly explanatory of each of the foregoing clauses of this verse; they most evidently determine the only proper subjects of baptism to be the *real* and *professing* disciples of Christ; and the sense of the whole verse to be this:

— “ *The promise*, which is here spoken of as entitling to baptism, *is to you* (that is, to Peter’s immediate hearers) *even as many of you as the Lord our God shall call; and this promise is to your children*, that is, descendants; *even as many of them as the Lord our God shall call; and this promise is also to all* that



I believe too, that as *the outward and visible sign*, ought to be a *representation of the inward and spiritual grace*,<sup>d</sup> and as baptism is an expression of a *death* and a *burial*; so that the only *scriptural*, and the only *significant* method of administering this ordinance is that of *immersion* or *burying the person under the water*.

The Lord's supper, I believe to be an institution of Christ, wherein, by the breaking of bread, and the pouring out of wine,  
is

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“ *that are asun off in all ages, and all nations where the*  
 “ *gospel shall be sent; even as many of them as the Lord*  
 “ *our God shall call.*” As for the term τοῖς τέκνοις, which is supposed here to signify *infants*, it frequently signifies *posterity* or *descendants* in general. In Acts xiii. 33. it is applied to persons grown up. Paul says, “ The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto *us their children* τοῖς τέκνοις; and it cannot signify *infants* in the text I am considering, as it speaks only of such of the descendants of the Jews *whom the Lord should call* (that is, call by grace to the repentance mentioned in verse 38,) and who, therefore, must be *adult*, to give evidences of such a call: So that this text, seems to me, to be so far from an argument for the baptism of infants, that it is a very plain argument *against* it; and implies that they have no more a right to baptism, than they have to the Lord's supper, the pre-requisites to both being the same.

<sup>d</sup> Church of England catechism.

is set forth to us, the bruising of the body of the Lord Jesus, and the shedding of his blood for our sins : This bread and wine is given to the communicants, in token that the Lord Jesus freely makes over the benefits of his merits and death to them ; and they, by receiving and partaking, signify, that by faith they receive Christ and live upon him for the life, the nourishment and strength of their souls.

The officers appointed in the church of Christ, I believe to be the *Bishop* and the *Deacons* : The office of the Bishop (otherwise called the *Pastor* or *Elder*) of the church is to preside as the mouth of the church ; to preach the word, and to administer ordinances : The *Deacon's* office is to serve tables, to take care of the poor, and faithfully to manage such worldly substance as may be in the church's possession.

I believe, that as the godly and ungodly die ; so there will be a resurrection of the bodies, both of the just and the unjust ; but that the dead in Christ shall rise first, cloathed in a body fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.

I believe, that however intricate many things may seem to our apprehensions in this world, and sin may sometimes appear to be triumphant; yet, that there is a regular plan laid for the distributions of providence and grace, the concluding scene of which will clear up the whole, and cast light upon all preceding transactions; *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*; \* at this time all the vast designs of infinite wisdom and mercy will be unveiled; the actions of men canvassed; the wickedness of the ungodly publickly displayed, and the sentence due to their many crimes pronounced; *depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels*; while, on the other hand, the righteous will, with the utmost delight, hear the *unnerring Judge* say to them, *come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*: So the wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment*; but *the righteous into life eternal*. †

These are the chief articles of my belief: These the doctrines, which I hope I have in my heart embraced, from a serious conviction

\* 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Mat. xxv. 34, 41, 46.



viction of their truth, their necessity and importance; the result also, I trust, of some experience of their powerful and saving influence: These are the truths which I propose to inculcate on others; at the same time observing, that I by no means pretend to infallibility; but confess myself a frail imperfect creature, who greatly need instruction. I desire to love all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, tho' they may not be in all points, of the same opinion with me; and I earnestly entreat your prayers for me, that I may be led into all truth; and that God may be glorified by me in life and death. Amen! and Amen!

**F I N I S.**

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